ROAD TRIP · UNITED STATES

California wine and dine

From San Francisco's oysters through Sonoma, Napa, Paso Robles and Santa Barbara's wine country to the tacos of Los Angeles.

Length	17 days, 16 nights
Distance	1,020 km, 8 driving days
Behind the wheel	13 h 10 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – San Francisco (SFO), Los Angeles (LAX) – Amsterdam

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San Francisco	Days 1–3	**8**
Healdsburg	Days 4–5	**10**
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Los Olivos	Days 13–14	**18**
Los Angeles	Days 15–16	**20**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		San Francisco	20	20 min	
2		San Francisco			
3		San Francisco			
4		Healdsburg	110	1 h 30 min	
5		Healdsburg			
6		Napa	80	1 h 10 min	
7		Napa			
8		Napa			
9		Monterey	240	3 h	
10		Monterey			
11		Paso Robles	190	2 h 20 min	
12		Paso Robles			
13		Los Olivos	140	1 h 50 min	
14		Los Olivos			
15		Los Angeles	210	2 h 40 min	
16		Los Angeles			
17		Flight home from LAX	30	30 min	

1,020 km · 13 h 10 min behind the wheel · on average 130 km a driving day

Kilometres and drive times by road (OSRM, OpenStreetMap), without stops: plan generously.

The route



Map: US Census Bureau (public domain) · roads © OpenStreetMap contributors

ON THE ROAD

Day 1	Land at San Francisco (SFO), drive to San Francisco · About 20 km (10 mi), 20 min
Day 4	San Francisco, drive to Healdsburg · About 110 km (70 mi), 1 h 30 min
Day 6	Healdsburg, drive to Napa · About 80 km (50 mi), 1 h 10 min
Day 9	Napa, drive to Monterey · About 240 km (150 mi), 3 h
Day 11	Monterey, drive to Paso Robles · About 190 km (120 mi), 2 h 20 min
Day 13	Paso Robles, drive to Los Olivos · About 140 km (90 mi), 1 h 50 min

Well prepared

ESTA

Dutch and Belgian travellers need no visa for a holiday of up to 90 days, but do need an approved ESTA before boarding. It costs about $40, is valid for two years (or until your passport expires) and is applied for online. Apply at least 72 hours before you fly, and only on the official site.

esta.cbp.dhs.gov

Passport

An electronic passport (with the chip symbol), valid for the whole stay. Children need their own passport and ESTA.

nl.usembassy.gov

Driving licence

Your Dutch driving licence is accepted for renting and driving a car as a visitor. An international driving permit next to it helps with police and some rental desks.

anwb.nl

Renting a car

The renter is the main driver and pays with a credit card in their own name (no debit or prepaid card); the deposit is held on it. Usually from 21, and from 21 to 24 you pay a young-driver fee of about $25 a day. Book from home with insurance included (CDW/LDW and extra liability, SLI) and an extra driver if you want to take turns. Returning the car elsewhere (a one-way trip) costs extra. Fuel is sold by the gallon (3.8 litres); fill it up yourself before you bring it back.

Driving in the USA

Keep right; speeds are in miles an hour (65 mph is 105 km/h). Turning right on red is allowed after stopping, unless a sign says no. At a 4-way stop, whoever stopped first goes first. For a stopped yellow school bus with flashing lights you stop in both directions. Toll roads are often electronic only: ask your rental company about its toll pass. On remote stretches (parks, desert) there's little signal and a long way to the next pump: fill up at half and download the map.

Renting an RV

You can rent an RV from about 21 with an ordinary car licence. On top of the rent, count on mileage (often per mile), a kit with bedding and kitchen things, cleaning and the campsite: in the popular parks you book those months ahead on recreation.gov. Big RVs aren't allowed on every park road. Take photos of the RV when you pick it up: damage and missing items are the most heard complaint.

recreation.gov

National parks

Most big parks charge per car. Visitors from abroad pay $100 a person extra at 11 popular parks; the annual pass for non-residents is $250. Some parks need a timed-entry reservation in high season.

nps.gov

Money and tipping

Prices are without sales tax, which is added at the till. In restaurants a tip of 15 to 20% is usual. Cards are accepted almost everywhere; at the pump you may be asked for a ZIP code, so pay inside.

Travel insurance and health

Care in the USA is very expensive: take travel insurance with worldwide medical cover, and check whether your health insurance covers the USA. Cancellation insurance covers the trip if you can't go; insure the rental car with the rental company (see Renting a car). Take medicines in their original packaging, with a prescription in English. Emergency number: 911.

Power, phone and time

110 volt with flat two-pin plugs (type A/B): bring an adapter. A US eSIM is cheaper than roaming. The mainland has four time zones, Arizona mostly without daylight saving time.

Customs

Fresh food, meat and fruit may not be brought in. Declare food you carry.

Packing list

- [ ] Passport (valid for the whole trip)
- [ ] ESTA, printed
- [ ] Driving licence (and an international one)
- [ ] Credit card in the driver's name
- [ ] Travel and cancellation insurance
- [ ] Confirmations: flights, car, hotels
- [ ] America the Beautiful pass for the parks
- [ ] Plug adapter for type A/B (110 volt)
- [ ] Car charger and phone holder
- [ ] eSIM or offline maps
- [ ] Sunscreen, sunglasses and a cap
- [ ] Water bottles for the desert
- [ ] Hiking shoes
- [ ] Layers: the coast and the nights get cold
- [ ] Medicines, in your hand luggage
- [ ] A pen, for this booklet

DON'T FORGET

Notes



DAYS 1–3

San Francisco CA

The Ferry Building, oysters and dim sum

Land at San Francisco (SFO), drive to San Francisco: about 20 km (10 mi), 20 min

3 nights

DON'T MISS

- The Ferry Building and its Saturday farmers' market
- Oysters and crab at the counter of Swan Oyster Depot
- Dim sum in Chinatown and espresso in North Beach
- Burritos in the Mission and bread from Tartine
- The Golden Gate Bridge and Sausalito

With an extra night

With a fourth night: the ferry to Sausalito and the redwoods of Muir Woods.

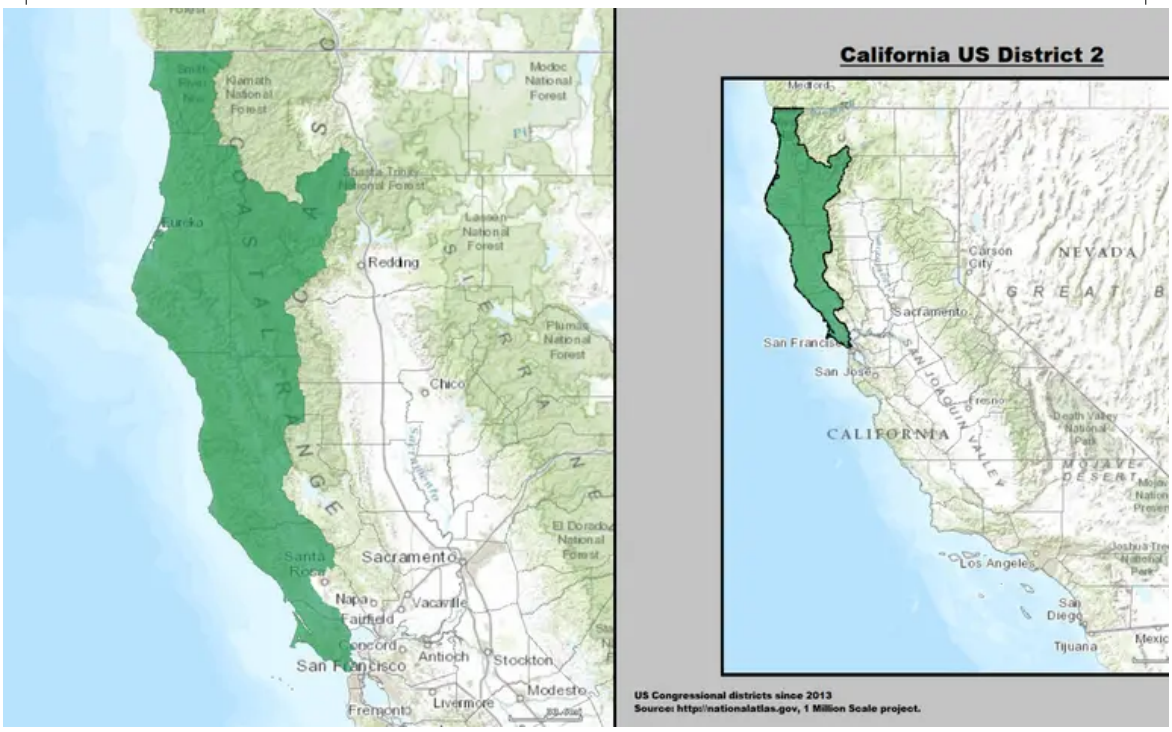
EXCURSIONS

- [ ] North Beach and Chinatown food tour — roughly €110 a person
- [ ] Golden Gate Bridge bike tour — roughly €60 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Inn at Union Square · 3★
  440 Post St
- [ ] Chancellor Hotel on Union Square · 3★ — roughly €120
  433 Powell St
- [ ] White Swan Inn · 3★ — roughly €150
  845 Bush St
- [ ] Petite Auberge · 3★ — roughly €190
  863 Bush St
- [ ] Hyatt Place San Francisco/Downtown · 3★ — roughly €190
  701 3rd St

NOTES



DAYS 4–5

Healdsburg CA

Sonoma: tasting around the plaza

San Francisco, drive to Healdsburg: about 110 km (70 mi), 1 h 30 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Thirty tasting rooms around the plaza, on foot
- Zinfandel in Dry Creek Valley, by bike
- Pinot noir and chardonnay in the Russian River Valley
- The Jordan Winery estate in Alexander Valley
- Dinner at SingleThread, three Michelin stars (book well ahead)

With an extra night

With another night: the coast at Bodega Bay and Jenner, with fresh crab.

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Sonoma wine tour with a driver — roughly €150 a person
- ☐ Dry Creek Valley winery bike tour — roughly €120 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

NOTES



DAYS 6–8

Napa CA

Napa Valley: cabernet and Yountville

Healdsburg, drive to Napa: about 80 km (50 mi), 1 h 10 min

3 nights

DON'T MISS

- Oxbow Public Market in Napa
- Yountville: The French Laundry (book two months ahead) and Bouchon Bakery
- Cabernet at Robert Mondavi and in the Stags Leap District
- Sparkling wine on the terrace of Domaine Carneros
- The Culinary Institute of America's school in St. Helena
- The mud baths of Calistoga

With an extra night

With a fourth night: a hot-air balloon over the vineyards at sunrise.

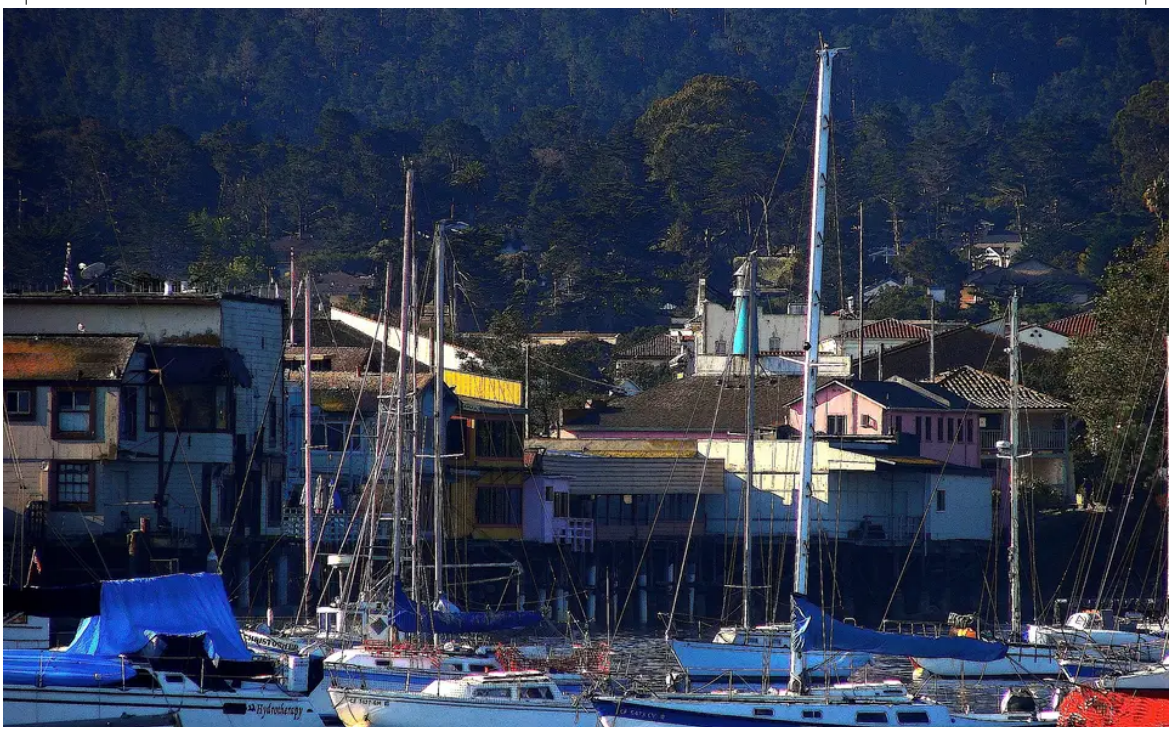
EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Napa Valley Wine Train with lunch — roughly €250 a person
- [ ] Napa Valley hot air balloon ride — roughly €300 a person
- [ ] Napa wine tour with a driver — roughly €160 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Poetry Inn Napa Valley · 3★
  6380 Silverado Trail
- [ ] Serene Napa Retreat w/ Pool Access & Patio! · 3★
  1600 Atlas Peak Rd
- [ ] The Giraffe Inn at Old Parks Manor · 3★
  4036 Browns Valley Rd.
- [ ] 1801 First Luxury Inn · 3★
  1801 First Street
- [ ] Elm House Inn · 3★
  800 California Boulevard

NOTES



DAYS 9–10

Monterey CA

Carmel and the chowder of Cannery Row

Napa, drive to Monterey: about 240 km (150 mi), 3 h

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Clam chowder on Fisherman's Wharf and Cannery Row
- The tasting rooms of Carmel-by-the-Sea and Carmel Valley
- 17-Mile Drive and Pebble Beach

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Monterey Bay Aquarium ticket — roughly €60 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] Spindrift Inn · 3★ — roughly €270
  652 Cannery Row
- [ ] Victorian Inn · 3★ — roughly €200
  487 Foam St
- [ ] Stage Coach Lodge · 3★ — roughly €130
  1111 Tenth Street
- [ ] Hampton Inn Monterey · 3★ — roughly €220
  2401 Del Monte Ave
- [ ] Ramada by Wyndham Monterey · 3★ — roughly €120
  2058 N. Fremont Street

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DAYS 11–12

Paso Robles CA

Zinfandel and Rhône wines in the hills

Monterey, drive to Paso Robles: about 190 km (120 mi), 2 h 20 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Big Sur and Hearst Castle on the way, then over Highway 46 into the hills
- Rhône wines at Tablas Creek
- The view from DAOU on its hilltop
- Restaurants around the downtown square
- Sensorio, a field of lights after dark

EXCURSIONS

- ☐ Hearst Castle tour — roughly €40 a person
- ☐ Paso Robles wine tour with a driver — roughly €130 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

NOTES



DAYS 13–14

Los Olivos CA

Santa Ynez Valley, the land of Sideways

Paso Robles, drive to Los Olivos: about 140 km (90 mi), 1 h 50 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Twenty tasting rooms along Grand Avenue, on foot
- Pinot noir from the Sta. Rita Hills
- Oak-grilled steak at The Hitching Post II in Buellton
- The Danish village of Solvang and its aebleskiver
- On the way to LA: the Urban Wine Trail in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Santa Ynez Valley wine tour with a driver — roughly €140 a person

HOTEL

Name, address, confirmation number:

NOTES



DAYS 15–16

Los Angeles CA

Grand Central Market and tacos

Los Olivos, drive to Los Angeles: about 210 km (130 mi), 2 h 40 min

2 nights

DON'T MISS

- Grand Central Market downtown
- Food-truck tacos and Korean barbecue in Koreatown
- The Santa Monica farmers' market (Wednesday and Saturday)
- Seafood on the Malibu coast

With an extra night

With a third night: Hollywood, Griffith Observatory and Venice Beach.

EXCURSIONS

- [ ] Los Angeles food tour — roughly €100 a person

HOTEL

- [ ] FOUND Hotels, Santa Monica, Series by Marriott · 3★ — roughly €200
  12311 Santa Monica Blvd
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Los Angeles LAX/Century Boulevard · 3★ — roughly €150
  5933 W Century Blvd
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express Hollywood Walk of Fame by IHG · 3★ — roughly €220
  1921 N Highland Avenue
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express West Los Angeles by IHG · 3★ — roughly €350
  11250 Santa Monica Blvd
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE · 3★ — roughly €190
  901 W Olympic Blvd

NOTES

What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	San Francisco	€240	–	€60	**€300**
2	San Francisco	€240	–	€60	**€300**
3	San Francisco	€240	–	€60	**€300**
4	Healdsburg	€380	–	€60	**€440**
5	Healdsburg	€380	–	€60	**€440**
6	Napa	€350	–	€60	**€410**
7	Napa	€350	–	€60	**€410**
8	Napa	€350	–	€60	**€410**
9	Monterey	€260	–	€60	**€320**
10	Monterey	€260	–	€60	**€320**
11	Paso Robles	€230	–	€60	**€290**
12	Paso Robles	€230	–	€60	**€290**
13	Los Olivos	€300	–	€60	**€360**
14	Los Olivos	€300	–	€60	**€360**
15	Los Angeles	€250	–	€60	**€310**
16	Los Angeles	€250	–	€60	**€310**
17	Flight home from LAX	–	–	€60	**€60**

Flights	€1,700
Hotels	€4,610
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€1,020
Total	**€7,330**
	€3,670 a person

An estimate to plan with (prices of 2026-10): hotels, the ticked excursions, car hire and flights. No fuel or meals.

Notes

About this booklet

Made on rondreis.expert. Your trip is still there, to change and print again: usa.roundtrip.expert/tours/california-wine-and-dine/

PHOTOS

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MAP AND TYPE

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